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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT	Corrective Labor Camp near Verkhoturys	DATE DISTR.	25 November 1955
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COUNTRY USSR (Sverdlovsk Oblast)

SUBJECT Corrective Labor Camp Near Verkhoturys

DATE OF INFORMATION

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DATE DISTR. 26 August  
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REFERENCES:

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**THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION**

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2. The LesSpetsKontora was engaged in cutting timber in nearby forests and hauling the timber away by rail. The administrative headquarters as well as a saw mill subordinate to this office were located in Verkhoturys. Prior to the amnesty there also were two corrective labor camps in the vicinity. The prisoners were used exclusively to cut timber for the office and to load the timber on railroad cars. However, the amnesty made such inroads into the prison labor supply that the kontora was forced to hire some 200 men to replace the released prisoners.

3. Source did not know the name or number of either of the corrective labor camps. The first camp was located approximately 15 kilometers north of Verkhoturys. After the amnesty, the prisoners remaining in this camp were moved to the second camp, which was located on the outskirts of a small village called Novaya Koreschikhha, approximately 10 kilometers north of Verkhoturys.

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The camp occupied an area of approximately

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400x400 meters and was surrounded by a double stockade four or five meters high, topped by several rows of barbed wire. There was a guard tower at each corner of the compound which was lighted by floodlights at night. A high stockade divided the camp into two equal sections with an entry way into each section. There were guardhouses at each entrance. One section was for prisoners serving short sentences working under guard in the forest cutting timber. Source believes that the prisoners in the other section were serving long-term sentences for political crimes. These prisoners were kept under a more strict regime and were only taken out occasionally under heavy guard to work on construction projects near the camp, such as the erection of living quarters and a recreation club for the newly hired workers employed by the lumber office. Source estimated that there were altogether about 2,000 prisoners. The guards wore uniforms with red shoulder boards and red cap bands "like the infantry". Source believes dogs were also kept in the camp because he heard them barking at night on several occasions. He thought these dogs were probably allowed to run loose in the space between the inner and outer stockade walls of the camp.

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5.

[redacted] the prisoners made one attempt to escape from this camp. Two of the prisoners who were cutting timber in the woods managed to hide among logs which were being loaded on railway cars. As far as source knew, these men made good their escape since they had not been apprehended two weeks later [redacted]

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6.

[redacted] All of the lumber office workers who could be spared, as well as prisoners serving short sentences, were pressed into fire fighting brigades. It was said that the fires broke out because of the unusually dry hot weather. The brigades were only equipped with shovels and picks and could not make much headway against the fires which usually burned out of their own accord. On two occasions, source noticed an old two-place, single-engine biplane which flew over the fire and dropped some sort of "fire bombs". He did not know what these "bombs" looked like or what chemical substance they contained. They had little if any effect on stopping the fires, which were too widespread.

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7. On one occasion the fire advanced to a point where it threatened the corrective labor compound and burned part of the outer stockade before it could be brought under control. The prisoners were herded out of the compound under guard but some refused to leave and climbed to the roofs of their living quarters, stating they preferred to remain and be burned to death. Prisoners who were led out were taken to the nearby fields and told to lie flat on the ground. Many refused to do so until the guards fired several shots over their heads.
8. By 22 August, [redacted] there were still some sporadic fires in the area though most of them had been brought under control. He estimated that more than 200 hectares of forest had been destroyed.

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